

BUDGET, FINANCE & INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

May 15, 2013

5:30 P.M.

Courthouse

MINUTES:

<u>Members Present:</u>	<u>Others Present:</u>	<u>Others Present:</u>	<u>Others Present:</u>
Comm. Charlie Baum	Ernest Burgess	Jim Cope	Melissa Stinson
Comm. Joe Frank Jernigan	Teb Batey	Dr. Michael Payne	Donna Blythe
Comm. Will Jordan	Heather Dawbarn	Sonya Stephenson	Brian Robertson
Comm. Robert Peay, Jr.	Rob Mitchell	Doug Demosi	Barbara Milner
Comm. Steve Sandlin	Lisa Crowell	Delwyn Corbitt	Darin Moore
Comm. Doug Shafer	Nicole Lester	Ben Mankin	Eric Hill
Comm. Joyce Ealy, Chr.	Lisa Nolen	John Lodl	Scott Broden

Regina Harvey, Jason Roberts, Kathy McMahan, Rena Scudder, Sue Cain, Susan Allen, Jeff Davidson, Jeff Sandvig, Elaine Short

Chairman Ealy presided and called the meeting to order at 5:30 P. M. with Comm. Sandlin being absent at that time.

2013-14 BUDGET REVIEW

To begin the review of the 2013-14 departmental budgets, Chairman Ealy advised that each department head would join the committee at the table, the mayor would explain his recommendation, the department head would be allowed to explain any required details about their budget and if they agreed or disagreed with the mayor's recommendation, and the committee members would be allowed to ask questions and have any discussion that was needed.

Chairman Ealy advised that a voice vote would be taken on each of the budgets.

COMMUNITY LEARNING:

Dr. Michael Payne, Community Learning Center Director, was present to answer questions regarding the 2013-14 budget.

Mayor Burgess advised that each budget would reflect an increase in line item 205, Employee and Dependent Insurance, and a one step-increase on the current pay table had been built into the budgets.

Mayor Burgess advised that the Community Learning budget was a continuation budget and reflected no increases except for the employee insurance and the salaries and benefits. The recommended total for 2013-14 was \$247,960.

Dr. Payne advised that he accept the mayor's recommendation.

Comm. Jernigan moved, seconded by Comm. Shafer to approve the 2013-14 Community Learning Center budget as recommended by the County Mayor totaling \$247,960.

The motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

Comm. Shafer asked if the increases to the employee insurance reflected what the Budget Committee approved or what the Insurance Committee recommended.

Finance Director Lisa Nolen advised that the recommendation for the employee insurance reflected the Insurance Committee's recommendation. The Budget Committee's recommendation would add \$103,700 to the General Fund, \$4,430 to the Solid Waste/Sanitation Fund, and approximately \$18,530 to the Ambulance Fund.

COUNTY COMMISSION:

The County Mayor's recommendation for the 2013-14 County Commission budget totaled \$245,507.

Comm. Jernigan moved, seconded by Comm. Peay to approve the 2013-14 County Commission budget totaling \$245,507 as recommended by the County Mayor.

The motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

BOARD OF EQUALIZATION:

Mr. Rob Mitchell, Property Assessor, was present to answer questions regarding the 2013-14 Board of Equalization budget totaling \$20,930 as recommended by the County Mayor.

Mayor Burgess advised that the amount recommended for the board member's fees reflected an increase from \$10,000 to \$12,000 in anticipation that they would have a few more meetings.

Mr. Mitchell advised that he concurred with the mayor's recommendation.

Comm. Shafer stated that next year was a reappraisal year, and that the additional \$2,000 might not be enough.

Following review, Comm. Jernigan moved, seconded by Comm. Jordan to approve the 2013-14 Board of Equalization budget as recommended by the County Mayor totaling \$20,930.

The motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

PROPERTY ASSESSOR:

The County Mayor's recommendation for the 2013-14 Property Assessor's budget totaled \$1,465,952, which represented a decrease from the 2012-13 budget of \$409,472.

Mayor Burgess advised that Mr. Mitchell had requested the realignment of some of the employee positions. Line item 52300-106, Deputies, reflected a decrease from \$962,079 to \$722,504 due to moving some positions to the Reappraisal budget. The budget also reflected moving the expense for line item 52300-317, Data Processing Services, to the Reappraisal budget. The Property Assessor's budget also reflected a decrease in Account 52300-709, Data Processing Equipment, from \$156,000 to \$105,000, again with a portion of this expense being moved to the Reappraisal budget.

Mr. Mitchell provided a written summary of the 2012-13 budget year explaining that while the budgets for the Property Assessor and Reappraisal reflected a slight increase overall due in part to the increases in personnel and benefit costs and the need to replace equipment, he was confident that his office would continue to provide efficient, professional service while being good stewards of tax dollars. The report also stated that approximately \$354,000 of unused budgeted funds from the current budget would be returned to the county's General Fund.

Following review, Comm. Jernigan moved, seconded by Comm. Baum to approve the 2013-14 Property Assessor's budget as recommended by the County Mayor totaling \$1,465,952.

The motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

REAPPRAISAL:

The County Mayor's recommendation for the 2013-14 Reappraisal budget totaled \$1,115,762, which reflected an increase from \$544,933 to \$1,115,762 due largely to the realignment of the employee positions from the Property Assessor's budget to the Reappraisal budget. Line item 52310-317, Data Processing Services, was recommended at \$95,000. Again, this line item was

moved from the Property Assessor's budget to the Reappraisal budget. Account 52310-348, Postal Charges, reflected an increase from \$8,000 to \$50,000 due to next year being a reappraisal year. Account 52310-709, Data Processing Equipment, recommended at \$54,000 was for the replacement of data processing equipment and updating software. Account 52310-399, Other Contracted Services, recommended at \$30,000 was for the purpose of hiring an expert for the defense of appeals.

Mr. Mitchell advised that he concurred with the mayor's recommendations.

Following discussion, Comm. Jordan moved, seconded by Comm. Peay to approve the 2013-14 Reappraisal budget as recommended by the County Mayor totaling \$1,115,762.

The motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

COUNTY MAYOR:

The recommendation for the 2013-14 County Mayor budget totaled \$594,239. Account 51300-103, Assistants, reflected the salary for the Deputy to the Mayor for a full year. The budget also included a new account, 53100-331, Legal Services, to cover the costs for miscellaneous legal services that are not budgeted anywhere else in the budget. For example, this would cover miscellaneous legal costs, for animal control issues, etc. It was noted that the salaries for all of the elected officials included adjustments as required by the state.

Following review, Comm. Jordan moved, seconded by Comm. Baum to approve the 2013-14 County Mayor's budget as presented totaling \$594,239.

The motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

Mrs. Sonya Stephenson, Human Resource Director, was present to answer questions regarding the 2013-14 Human Resources budget totaling \$264,714 as recommended by the County Mayor, which reflected a decrease from the 2012-13 budget of \$21,976.

Mrs. Stephenson advised that she agreed with the County Mayor's recommendation.

Comm. Jernigan moved, seconded by Comm. Peay to approve the 2013-14 Human Resource budget as recommended by the County Mayor totaling \$264,714.

The motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

Mrs. Stephenson updated the committee regarding the salary plan. She reminded the committee that in 2011 there was a recommendation to give the topped-out employees an increase to their pay of 1.75%, which led to a study of the county's pay plan. A salary survey was conducted with the assistance of CTAS and MTSU. As a result, it was determined that county employees needed to be evaluated to make sure that they were receiving proper credit for all of their years of service with the county. This process was conducted last year. Every full time employee was reviewed, looking at all of the roles that they had served in with the county, and determining if they were positioned in the proper pay grade on the pay table.

In 2005 the 40 pay grade pay table was compressed into 14 pay grades, and it was determined that some of the job titles had been compressed into groups where they should not have been. Phase Two of the current pay study revealed that the pay table should be expanded from 14 pay grades to 56 pay grades. On the 56 pay grade pay table, not every pay grade would contain a position, because based on the study there might not be a job title for every pay grade. As a result, there would be some vacant pay grades. The next step would be to place the positions into their proper pay grade on the newly expanded pay table. Phase Two would also provide that the maximum pay increase for any employee would be capped at \$5,000, which was also done last year. It would also be recommended that the pay table be indexed by two percent due

to inflation based upon the current trends and the trends from last year. Indexing the pay table would also help 141 employees who were currently topped out.

Copies of the pay table that had been used since 2010-2011 was provided comparing it to the 2007-2008 pay table. The Finance Director stated that the difference in the pay table that was being used today and the pay table that was used in 2007-2008 was two percent. This meant that the pay table had only been increased twice since 2007-2008 by one percent each time. In 2012-13 the 14 pay grade, 10-step pay table was expanded to 20 steps to try to provide employees with a step increase every year. A copy of the 56 pay grade, 20-step table was also provided, and the Finance Director explained the logic in the increases between the steps and how the table was designed.

Mrs. Stephenson explained how the survey data was used to plot where individual job titles should be placed on the pay table, with step 10 representing the median salary on the pay table.

The Finance Director stated that the assumption was that the median salary would be reached by an employee with ten years of experience.

Mrs. Stephenson advised that in 2011 the cost of living increased by 3.16%, in 2012 the cost of living increased by 2%, as of March 2013, the cost of living was up by 1.5%. She also noted that TCRS provided retirees with cost of living increases. In 2012, the increase from TCRS for retirees was three percent, and as of July 1, 2013 they will be giving a 1.7% increase to retirees.

Comm. Shafer noted that with a percentage increase, the employees with the lower salaries would receive less dollars and inflation affected them more. He stated that the Federal Government was going to change the way inflation was calculated, which would provide smaller increases for social security.

Mrs. Stephenson stated that indexing the pay table would have to be looked at annually.

Comm. Peay asked if the expanded 56 pay grade table provided anything for employees who were topped out.

Mrs. Stephenson advised that topped out employees could see some improvement on the new expanded pay table if their position was re-evaluated and they were moved to a new pay grade based on the salary survey information.

Mayor Burgess advised that it would take approximately \$840,000 to implement the first phase of Phase Two placing employees in the proper pay grade on the new expanded pay table.

Mrs. Stephenson advised that there were a few employees who would not receive any increase in pay, because based on the salary survey they were being paid more than they should. She stated that no one would see a reduction in pay, but their pay increases would be held until they caught up.

Comm. Sandlin stated that it would take a commitment from the County Commission to stand behind the plan and move forward with it year-to-year. He stated that some commissioners have a hard time voting for future commitments.

Mrs. Stephenson advised to increase the entire current pay table by one percent would cost approximately \$378,000.

The Finance Director advised to increase the new expanded pay table would cost more than \$378,000.

Comm. Sandlin stated that historically, the County Commission had tried to take care of employees across the board, but there had been some years where nothing else could be done.

Mayor Burgess stated that the expanded pay table reflected the comparative analysis with other jurisdictions and would put Rutherford County in a competitive market place, and currently Rutherford County was not in a competitive market place on a number of positions that needed to be filled. He stated that he would recommend moving to the expanded pay table, and the discussion about increasing the pay table could take place every year. He stated that the most important step would be moving to the expanded pay table so that all employees were on equal footing.

COUNTY ATTORNEY:

Mr. Jim Cope, County Attorney, was present to answer questions regarding the 2013-14 County Attorney budget as recommended by the County Mayor totaling \$259,000. Mayor Burgess advised that the budget was a continuation budget.

The Finance Director noted that Account 101-51400-331, Legal Services, budgeted at \$107,269 reflected moving some of the miscellaneous legal services to the County Mayor's budget.

Mr. Cope advised that he concurred with the mayor's recommendation.

Comm. Jernigan moved, seconded by Comm. Sandlin to approve the County Attorney 2013-14 budget totaling \$259,000 as recommended by the County Mayor.

The motion passed by voice vote with Commissioner Peay voting "no".

ELECTION COMMISSION:

Mrs. Nicole Lester, Election Registrar, was present to answer questions regarding the 2013-14 Election Commission budget totaling \$800,443 as recommended by the County Mayor.

Mrs. Lester advised that a large part of the budget typically included payments to poll workers. However, in the upcoming fiscal year there will be two smaller elections one for the City of Murfreesboro and a potential May primary election.

Comm. Jernigan moved seconded by Comm. Sandlin to approve the 2013-14 Election Commission budget totaling \$800,443 as recommended by the County Mayor.

The motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

REGISTER OF DEEDS:

Mrs. Heather Dawbarn, Register of Deeds, was present to answer questions regarding the 2013-14 Register of Deeds budget totaling \$1,126,083 as recommended by the County Mayor, which was a reduction of \$174,317 from the prior year. Mayor Burgess advised that the Register of Deeds Office had already put some equipment in place. He stated that the budget reflected a continuation of current operations.

Mrs. Dawbarn advised that she did need to request approval to increase Account 51600-317, Data Processing Services, from \$30,855 to \$39,129 to provide an increase to the service provider to upgrade the server. The revised total was \$1,134,357.

Comm. Jernigan moved, seconded by Comm. Jordan to approve the 2013-14 Register of Deeds budget as revised totaling \$1,134,357.

The motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

PLANNING/ENGINEERING:

Mr. Doug Demosi, Planning Director, and Mr. Del Corbitt, Engineering Director were present to answer questions regarding the 2013-14 Planning & Engineering budget totaling \$705,050 as

recommended by the County Mayor, which reflected a decrease of \$47,456 from the prior year. Mayor Burgess advised that the budget reflected the elimination of a vacant planning position.

Mr. Demosi advised that Account 51720-308, Consultant, reflected a decrease from \$19,700 to zero as the Comprehensive Plan had been completed.

Comm. Sandlin moved, seconded by Comm. Jordan to approve the 2013-14 Planning and Engineering budget totaling \$705,050 as recommended by the County Mayor.

The motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

STORM WATER:

Mayor Burgess advised that the total recommended for the 2013-14 Storm Water budget was \$216,375, which reflected an increase of \$57,720. The budget reflected a new position for a storm water inspector to assist the engineer in enforcing the storm water requirements. Mayor Burgess advised that there had been discussion with Mr. Brooks, the Highway Superintendent, about assisting with the funding for the position. It was recommended that .1 cent on the property tax rate be moved from the Highway Fund for Public Works to the General Fund to provide funding for the water inspector position.

Mr. Corbitt advised that the budget also included funding to purchase some equipment for the inspector.

Comm. Baum asked how was it determined that the new position was needed and how did the department get by without the position last year.

Mr. Corbitt advised that up until this year, a Building Codes employee was being utilized to perform the inspections. The Building Codes Department lost a position last year and needed the employee back. Therefore, he requested the additional employee for the 2013-14 fiscal year. Mr. Corbitt advised that the program would continue to expand due to new requirements.

Mr. Corbitt advised that he would be retiring at the end of June, 2013. He also advised that Todd Sullivan, Storm Water Engineer, was moving to Alabama.

Comm. Jernigan moved, seconded by Comm. Jordan to approve the 2013-14 Storm Water budget totaling \$216,375 as recommended by the County Mayor.

The motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

ENVIRONMENTAL:

The County Mayor's recommendation for the 2013-14 Environmental budget totaled \$600, which covered the cost for communications for the office.

Comm. Peay moved, seconded by Comm. Shafer to approve the County Mayor's recommendation for the 2013-14 Environmental budget totaling \$600.

The motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

COUNTY BUILDINGS:

Mr. Ben Mankin, County Maintenance Director, was present to answer questions regarding the 2013-14 County Buildings budget totaling \$1,983,663, which reflected an increase of \$99,253.

Mayor Burgess explained that Account 51800-169, Part Time Personnel, reflected an increase of \$31,300, and advised that an error in calculation was made last year. At the May 9 Budget Committee, an amendment was approved increasing the funding for the part time personnel and the related benefits.

The Finance Director advised that Account 51800-309, Contracts with Government Agencies, needed to be adjusted. She advised that this account was also amended at the May 9 Budget Committee meeting. This line item provides funding to pay the City of Murfreesboro for maintenance and repairs to the civic plaza and the garage and for the landscaping around the square. She requested to increase the line item from \$82,000 to \$97,000. She also requested to adjust Account 101-51800-399, Other Contracted Services, from \$90,000 to \$91,000. The revised total for the 2013-14 County Buildings budget was \$1,999,663.

Mayor Burgess explained that Account 101-51800-707, Building Improvements, was recommended at \$125,000. However, he directed the committee's attention to the listing of the General Fund's capital needs explaining if the county continued to use the current judicial building and continued to occupy the old bank building and the coin building, an additional \$503,500 would be needed to make necessary improvements to the HVAC, plumbing, electrical, and repairs to the roof, walls, floors, and miscellaneous repairs. Mayor Burgess advised that as currently recommended, the budget did not include the \$503,500 for these repairs. If the county elected to use the old bank building and the coin building for the next five years or so, the budget would have to be amended. If the county was serious about continuing to occupy those two buildings, it would take a half million dollars to bring the buildings up to reasonable levels with the proper security.

Mr. Mankin advised that he concurred with the mayor's recommendation.

Comm. Jernigan moved, seconded by Comm. Jordan to approve the 2013-14 County Buildings budget as revised totaling \$1,999,663.

The motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

ARCHIVES:

Mr. John Lodl, Archives Director, was present to answer questions regarding the 2013-14 Archives budget totaling \$115,404, which reflected a decrease of \$79,252.

Mayor Burgess advised that the majority of the reduction could be attributed to the fact that the second phase of installing the new shelving had been completed.

Mr. Lodl advised that he agreed with the mayor's recommendation.

Comm. Shafer moved, seconded by Comm. Jernigan to approve the 2013-14 Archives budget as recommended totaling \$115,404.

The motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

RISK MANAGEMENT:

Mrs. Melissa Stinson, Risk Management Director, was present to answer questions regarding the 2013-14 Risk Management budget. The County Mayor's recommendation totaled \$1,148,017, which was largely attributed to increases for insurance premiums for property and casualty coverage.

The Finance Director advised that the Risk Management budget was funded in part by the OJI Program and the Employee Insurance Program.

Mrs. Stinson advised that she agreed with the mayor's recommendation.

Comm. Jernigan moved, seconded by Comm. Shafer to approve the 2013-14 Risk Management budget totaling \$1,148,017 as recommended by the County Mayor.

The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT:

The County Mayor's recommendation for the 2013-14 Finance Department budget totaled \$1,118,284, which reflected an increase of \$70,812 over the prior year. Mayor Burgess advised that most of the increase was due to the fact that two long-time employees would be retiring in the next fiscal year. He stated that the Finance Director needed the opportunity to provide an overlap in employment to provide training.

The Finance Director stated that between the two employees, there was 74 years of service. She also advised that both employees would be maxed out on their leave, and the budget provided funding for their payout.

Comm. Jernigan moved, seconded by Comm. Sandlin to approve the 2013-14 budget for the Finance Department totaling \$1,118,284 as recommended by the County Mayor.

The motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

TRUSTEE:

Mr. Teb Batey, County Trustee, was present to answer questions regarding the 2013-14 Trustee budget totaling \$626,050 as recommended by the County Mayor.

Mr. Batey advised that he agreed with the mayor's recommendation.

Comm. Sandlin moved, seconded by Comm. Jordan to approve the 2013-14 Trustee's budget totaling \$626,050 as recommended by the County Mayor.

The motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

COUNTY CLERK:

Mrs. Lisa Crowell, County Clerk, was present to answer questions regarding the 2013-14 County Clerk budget. The County Mayor's recommendation totaled \$2,347,015, which reflected an increase of \$137,432 over the prior year.

Mayor Burgess advised that the budget included one additional full time employee.

Mrs. Crowell advised that the budget included a security camera system for the Smyrna office and added four additional cameras for the Murfreesboro office.

Mrs. Crowell advised that the Smyrna Office had nine employees. She stated that her understanding was that was the same number of employees there ten years ago. With the population growth, another employee was needed at that location.

Comm. Baum asked Mrs. Crowell how she had gotten by this year without the additional person.

Mrs. Crowell stated it had been rough. She stated that the Smyrna Office had been asking for an additional employee for two years, and she had asked them to wait until she could see if there was a need. She stated that she did see the need. She stated that her employees waited on the general public, but that they also needed lunch. The busiest time was during lunch, as that was when most people came to the office.

The Finance Director also advised that an increase was being projected for the fees turned over to the county by the County Clerk.

Comm. Sandlin moved, seconded by Comm. Jernigan to approve the 2013-14 County Clerk budget totaling \$2,347,015 as recommended by the County Mayor.

The motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

Mrs. Crowell advised that she agreed with the mayor's recommendation.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS:

Mr. Brian Robertson, Information Technology Director, Mrs. Barbara Milner, and Mr. Darin Moore were present to answer questions regarding the 2013-14 GIS budget. The County Mayor's recommendation totaled \$1,140,940, which reflected an increase of \$48,560 over the prior year.

The Finance Director advised that \$81,000 had been amended out of the 2012-13 budget and placed in the Information Technology budget. The 2013-14 GIS budget actually reflected a decrease from the 2012-13 original budget.

Comm. Peay asked if the OIT Department assisted the Sheriff's Office with their information technology needs or if they were on their own.

Mr. Robertson advised that the Sheriff's Department was providing for their own IT needs for the most part, but they still assisted them with some of their GIS needs.

Following review, Comm. Jordan moved, seconded by Comm. Sandlin to approve the 2013-14 Geographic Information Systems budget as recommended by the County Mayor totaling \$1,140,940.

The motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY:

The County Mayor's recommendation for the 2013-14 Information Technology budget totaled \$2,527,657, which reflected an increase of \$358,017 over the prior year. The budget reflected increases of \$23,000 in Communications, \$32,000 in Data Processing Services, \$103,000 in Maintenance Agreements, and \$222,000 for Data Processing Equipment.

Mr. Robertson explained that the increase to communications was predominantly due to the internet data circuits. Information Technology, the Sheriff's Department, and the Ambulance Service all have issues resulting from increases to the data circuit costs and telephone circuit costs.

Mr. Moore advised that the internet capacity had increased as well as the band width as well as upgrading other circuits. Mr. Moore advised that the increase to Data Processing Services was due to running fiber optics to the Archives Building and the Maintenance Department. He stated it would be one run that would connect both buildings back to the Courthouse, which would offset their current DSL circuit. He explained that Mr. Lodl and Mr. Mankin both were utilizing more data base software, and they would like to be able to put it on the Courthouse storage array. Mr. Moore advised that the Maintenance Departments data base currently does not get backed up, because it was literally sitting on his PC. Regarding the Maintenance Agreements Account, Mr. Moore explained that the maintenance cost had increased on one of the storage arrays. Also, Maintenance Agreements included the Enterprise Agreement with Microsoft, and there were 350 different Windows licenses. There are 300 machines that still have Windows XP. He stated that Microsoft had notified them that as of April of next year, they would no longer support it, which meant no security patches, and no software upgrades. A large portion of the increase to Data Processing Equipment would be used to replace 300 PC's. These PC's are still utilizing XP and will not physically run Windows 7 or Windows 8. The line item also included \$25,000 for a county-wide server replacement, security camera expansion, additional security camera coverage for the old Health Department, Goldstein Building and 319 North Maple, and \$30,000 for the phone system expansion. The main data base server houses 15 different data bases for 15 different departments and is seven years old, and they would like to be able to replace it before the end of life. Funds are also included for the Cisco core replacement. The current main switch in the Courthouse, the core, will be at end of life in September 2014. If it is purchased next year,

it will take six to eight months to get it configured and put in place. He stated it was integral to everybody's use.

Mr. Robertson stated that he believed these items were necessary in order to continue to provide service to the county departments across the county. He stated he hoped this would help them focus more on service delivery and less on physical plant. He stated a good example of a project in that regard was the Circuit Court Clerk's efforts to move from a dumb terminal environment to a more dynamic courts management system, and the Register of Deed's efforts to virtualize records and OIT's effort to support that.

Mr. Robertson did point out that some offsetting revenue was received from Community Care, the Emergency Communications District, Consolidated Utility District, revenue from the sale of GIS data, contributions from the various municipalities, and Comcast Franchise Fees.

Following review, Comm. Jernigan moved, seconded by Comm. Sandlin to approve the 2013-14 Information Technology Department budget as recommended totaling \$2,527,657.

The motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Chairman Ealy advised that Mrs. Susan Allen from the Rutherford Neighborhood Alliance had requested to address the committee to present a proposal from her organization. Chairman Ealy asked the committee if there was any objection to allow a few minutes for Mrs. Allen to address the committee. Hearing none, Chairman Ealy, allowed Mrs. Allen to be added to the agenda. She advised the committee that there would be no discussion and no action taken.

Mrs. Allen informed the committee about the in-house attorney study that the Neighborhood Alliance had been working on for about the last six months. She stated that their intent was to address many of the concerns that were voiced by commissioners when an in-house attorney was discussed last year. They conducted interviews with several department heads as well as the mayor, and they came away from each interview with a greater understanding and appreciation of what county employees and department heads do and the complexity of the job. The depth of knowledge of the people was impressive and very eye-opening. The RNA appreciated the fact that it was a tough budget year. Every commissioner was given a copy of their "White Paper" and the focus was to show the financial advantages of having an in-house attorney and legal department that served only the county. The RNA believed that there could be considerable tax savings achieved after the initial transition period. The RNA would appreciate it if the county would consider funding an in-house attorney for a six month transition period to be funded in the 2013-14 budget. The transition period would need to begin in January, 2014, so a new department could be fully functional by July 1, 2014 at the end of the current Legal Services Agreement. If the funds were approved for the coming year's budget, then the full commission could decide if that money should be used to start the process.

Mr. Cope advised that he was not aware that a study was being done, and he had not received a copy of it, so he did not know what it contained or what it was based on. He stated that he thought an in-house attorney was vetted and fully discussed last year at length. The tapes and the minutes could be brought back up and the material could be reviewed. Secondly, he was confident that what was agreed to last year resulted in a conclusion that was satisfactory to the county in terms of the expense and the cost for providing those legal services. He stated that he believed their services were very cost effective, economically sensitive, and responsive to the county's needs. Thirdly, Mr. Cope stated that he thought that commissioners would find that the legal services they provided were highly effective, highly efficient, and quite beneficial to the county. Mr. Cope stated that his firm hoped to continue to be able to do the work that they have been doing.

Mr. Cope stated that it was a tough budget year, and any time a new department was created, it would continue growing and expanding. He stated that he believed the way the county's legal services were being handled was tax effective and cost effective for the citizens of Rutherford

County. He stated that he did not believe the citizens of Rutherford County wanted more government employees, bigger government departments, or more staffing. It might start small, but it would grow.

Mr. Cope stated that not having seen the report and only reading what was in the newspaper, part of the report was factually inaccurate. The report stated that there were two employees in the legal department, and the county was bearing that cost. He stated that was not accurate, because his firm was paying the county for 75% of the legal assistant's salary. He stated he was really the only employee at the stated rate that he was given and 25% of the legal assistant's salary.

Mr. Cope asked the commissioners, that as they looked at the report, to judge it in light of their experience and what they have seen. He asked the commissioners to contact department heads and ask them about the legal services they were receiving, and if Mr. Cope's firm was responsive to their needs from a litigation standpoint as well as daily advice.

ADJOURNMENT:

Comm. Shafer made an announcement about several high school sporting events that were taking place.

There being no further business to be presented at this time, Chairman Ealy declared the meeting adjourned at 7:24 P.M.

Elaine Short, Secretary